

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DHA-02 IO-13 /078 W

-----130919Z 051269 /10

P R 130826Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3237

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR KS US SOPN

SUBJ: KOREAN REACTION TO CODEL WOLFF AND HOLBROOKE VISIT

1. FROM APRIL 11-13, KOREAN VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS DEVOTED MAJOR COVERAGE TO CODEL WOLFF'S VISIT TO SEOUL. FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE BEGAN WITH APRIL 11 AFTERNOON PAPERS: TONGA ILBO COVERED CODEL'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN JAPAN AND THEIR MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT PAK AND PRIME MINISTER CH-OE. ALL PAPERS APRIL 12 GAVE CODEL'S ARRIVAL AND CALLS LEAD COVERAGE, WITH PICTURES, EMPHASIZING ASST. SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S PRESS CONFERENCE, WHICH MOST PAPERS SUMMARIZED. CODEL WOLFF WAS THE SECOND STORY IN APRIL 13 MORNING PAPERS, WITH PICTURES AND STORIES ON FINAL PRESS CONFERENCE AT KIMPO AIRPORT APRIL 12.

2. EDITORIAL AND OTHER COMMENT WAS ALSO EXTENSIVE. GENERAL HOPE WAS CAPTURED BY CHOSON ILBO CARTOON APRIL 13, SHOWING KOREAN GENTLEMAN VIEWING DEPARTING AIRPLANE AND CALLING OUT "AFTER YOUR DEPARTURE, PLEASE REFLECT CAREFULLY." DEEP CONCERN OVER WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND FORCES WAS MAJOR EDITORIAL THEME, WITH TONGA ILBO HOPING U.S. WILL "EMPHASIZE MAINTENANCE OF PEACE ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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KOREAN PENINSULA, RATHER THAN HOW QUICKLY TROOPS MAY BE WITHDRAWN." CHUNGANG ILBO APRIL 11 EMPHASIZED NEED FOR U.S. TO PROVIDE "POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, AND MILITARY GUARANTEES" TO PREVENT WAR AND MAINTAIN POWER BALANCE IN KOREA AND REGION. CONSERVATIVE CHOSON ILBO EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM OVER "DEGREE OF FUNCTION OF U.S. AIR FORCES, WITHOUT GROUND TROOPS," AND CALLED ON ROKG NOT TO GIVE

UP IN FACE OF APPARENT USG DECISION FOR GROUND TROOP
WITHDRAWAL, BUT TO "CONTINUE STRONG DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS."
IN INSIDE FEATURE APRIL 13, HAN'GUK ILBOS AT T'AEK-SU
SPECULATED THAT HOLBROOKE'S VISIT WAS TO SET TIME FOR
DETAILED CONSULTATIONS ON WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND
TROOPS, AND CODEL WOLFF WAS HERE TO JUDGE PUBLIC OPINION
ABOUT SUCH WITHDRAWAL.

3. MENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS WAS RESTRICTED TO PAPERS'
QUOTATION OF COMMENTS AT FAREWELL NEWS CONFERENCE BY
REPT. EVANS AND WOLFF, WOLFF, BUT CHOSON ILBO DEVOTED MAJOR
GOSSIP COLUMN COVERAGE TO FACT THAT VARIOUS MEMBERS OF
CODEL MET WITH SUCH OPPOSITION FIGURES AS MR. AND MRS.
67, 09-SON, DR. AND MRS. CHONG IL-HYONG, MRS. KIM
TAE-JUNG, AND MEMBERS OF DUP INCLUDING YANG IL-TONG.

4. MOFA AND BLUE HOUSE HAVE REFLECTED EDITORIAL INTEREST
IN IMPRESSION ROKG MADE ON CODEL. WE HAVE RECEIVED
SEVERAL PHONE CALLS ASKING: HOW DID WE DO? OTHERWISE,
GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL REACTION HAS BEEN UNI-
VERSALLY POSITIVE. NATIONAL ASSMELBYMEN, BLUE HOUSE AND
MOFA OFFICIALS ALL BELIEVED VISIT PROVIDED REASSURANCES
THAT KOREA NOT FORGOTTEN OR FORSAKEN. SEVERAL HAVE STATED
BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXPRESSIONS BY DOEDL WEREXALANCED
AND FAIR AND THAT COMBINATION OF ADMINISTRATION/ CONGRESSIONAL
GROUP REENFORCED CREDIBILITYOF CODEL'S WORDS. LATTER POINT
CAME FROM TBC'S LEADING TV COMMENTATOR DAVID BONG AMONG OTHERS
WHO MADE IT DURING BROADCAST. OPPOSITION FIGURES AHVE ALSO
INDICATED PLEASURE OVER OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE DELEGATION
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MEMBERS. ACCORDING RELIABLE OPPOSITION SOURCE CLOSE TO
MRS. KIM TAE JUNG, MRS. KIM AND OTHERS AROUND HER ARE
SAYING CONTACTS INDICATE NEW AND STRONGER SUPPORT FROM
CARTER ADMINISTRATION FOR ROKG OPPOSITION CAUSE.
SNEIDER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CODELS, TROOP REDUCTIONS
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770461/aaaacaym.tel
Line Count: 102
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2819915
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN REACTION TO CODEL WOLFF AND HOLBROOKE VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, MARR, KS, US, (WOLFF, LESTER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/165035a6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009